

Meet the Fellows: Magdalene Kelel

Kenya, Civic Leadership, Wagner College

Magdalene Kelel currently serves as project leader with the Free Pentecostal Fellowship in Kenya (FPPK). She has extensive experience in HIV and AIDS community development programs, where she is responsible for initiating, designing and implementing project ideas and activities with a focus on human capacity development and facilitating a team approach for community and organizational change.

She has additional experience working with youth groups on advocacy and women on promoting sustainability and self-reliance for a better future. She holds a bachelor's degree in art from Egerton University and is currently conducting research on indigenous health care and its resilience.

Upon completion of the Washington Fellowship, Magdalene plans to work on youth participation in democratic processes, capacity development in early childhood education, and health issues.

Photo credit: Magdalene Kelel

Meet the Fellows: Robert Nkwangu

Uganda, Public Management, Morgan State University

Robert Nkwangu has seven years of experience working in issues related to children, youth and people with disabilities (PWDs). Currently, he is working with the National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda (NUDIPU) representing youth with disabilities, the Uganda Society for Disabled Children (USDC) and the Kampala Capital City Youth Council. His tasks are to ensure that youth with disabilities are given equal opportunities at all levels, both in government and in civil society. He also chairs the Finance Committee of the NUDIPU Board of Directors.

He previously worked as a job support and political officer with Handicap International. Nkwangu has been deaf since the age of 6 and uses sign language and interpreters to communicate but can do some lip reading. He finalized the research thesis for his master's degree in social sector planning and management from Makerere University, Kampala.

Upon his return from the Washington Fellowship, he hopes to mobilize young people, especially the marginalized PWDs, to raise their voices, advocate for inclusiveness, promote their human rights and form groups with unique initiatives so as to benefit from the many opportunities available to them.

Photo credit: Robert Nkwangu

Meet the Fellows: Valerie Labi

Ghana, Business and Entrepreneurship, Clark Atlanta University

Valerie Labi has over 10 years of experience specializing in the delivery of business solutions and creation of sales propositions for several companies in both Africa and Europe, including Vodafone PLC and Ernst & Young LLP. She currently serves as CEO of Clean Team Toilets, a social enterprise pioneering an affordable household sanitation solution for urban communities in developing countries.

She also works with the fair trade cooperative of Global Mamas, an organization that works with over 300 women-owned businesses across Ghana. Valerie played a critical role in developing a website that enabled the cooperative of small businesses to sell their produce directly to international buyers online, allowing them to earn a living wage.

Upon completion of the Washington Fellowship, Valerie is determined to continue to empower households and improve living conditions in Africa by driving the “democratization of toilets” and the “commercialization of waste” across the continent. She plans to replicate the Clean Team sanitation model in multiple developing countries, influence national sanitation agendas and create channels for skilled African youth to access employment opportunities in the social enterprise sector.

Photo credit: Valerie Labi

Meet the Fellows: Edda Zekarias Mekuria

Ethiopia, Civic Leadership, University of Virginia and the College of William & Mary

Edda Zekarias Mekuria has eight years of experience working in child and adult education, communication and advocacy. She currently works closely with UNDP Ethiopia’s Governance and Capacity Building Unit, where she is responsible for reporting and sharing program developments with different parties, including the Ethiopian government and its people as well as international partners.

She also assists with media-related projects by producing content and pictures for the UNDP Ethiopia website and writing updates for the organization's social media networks.

Edda also serves as the secretariat of the U.N. Communication Group (UNCG) in the office of the U.N. Ethiopia resident coordinator, assisting efforts to strengthen and promote the work of the U.N. in Ethiopia and also engage the state and private media in developing communication.

After the Washington Fellowship, Edda plans to share acquired knowledge and skills with her UNDP Ethiopia and UNCG colleagues.

Photo credit: Edda Zekarias Mekuria

Meet the Fellows: Ndeye Tening Gaye

Senegal, Public Management, University of Arkansas

Ndeye Tening Gaye has seven years of experience volunteering as a peer educator and researcher for organizations working on economic development, public policy and youth employment. She has worked with several organizations, including Oxfam, UNFPA and UNODC, as a researcher on youth issues focused on self-employment, active citizenship and technical vocational training.

She is also a coordinator for the Embassy of Dakar's Youth Council. Ndeye has organized several training sessions and recorded public service announcements for young people related to reproductive health.

After completing the Washington Fellowship, she plans to provide technical assistance regarding youth policies and assist in the implementation of an action plan on reproductive health rights.

Photo credit: Ndeye Tening Gaye

Meet the Fellows: Justin Philip Beswick

South Africa, Business and Entrepreneurship, University of Wisconsin-Stout

Justin Beswick has over seven years of experience in technology startups, primarily in the renewable and sustainability arena. He has launched and coordinated Google's technology incubator in Cape Town and completed a marine expedition up the East Coast of Africa. He is currently scaling up his

existing companies and working on getting a documentary of the marine expedition edited and broadcast.

He is also actively involved in growing communities that foster entrepreneurial mind-sets, skills and idea sharing that lead to action. He does so by channeling his time and efforts as a World Economic Forum Global Shaper and curator of TEDxCapeTown, and through the Sandbox-network.

He received a Bachelor of Science in biotechnology and also studied financial analysis and portfolio management at the University of Cape Town. Upon completion of the Washington Fellowship, Justin intends on further developing his companies and completing the documentary aspects of his marine expedition.

Photo credit: Justin Philip Beswick

Meet the Fellows: Josephine Kulea

Kenya, Civic Leadership, University of Delaware

Josephine Kulea is a child rights activist with over eight years of experience. Currently, she is the founder and Executive Director of Samburu Girls Foundation, where she focuses on rescuing young girls from harmful cultural practices performed in pastoralist communities in Northern Kenya.

Her work has earned her numerous awards, including UN Person of the Year in 2013. Josephine is a registered nurse with the Nursing Council of Kenya. Upon the completion of the Washington Fellowship, she hopes to use her new experience and network to further her efforts to end child exploitation and abuse.

Photo credit: Josephine Kulea

Meet the Fellows: Sabrina Gujjalu

Mauritius, Public Management, Howard University

Sabrina Gujjalu works at the Financial Services Commission in Mauritius, the regulator for nonbanking financial services and global business.

As manager in the Policy Unit, she conducts research and analysis for policy formulation and drives

the introduction of new policies, standards and financial products. She is currently involved in the establishment of proficiency standards for licensees in the nonbanking financial sector as well as in the development of a regulatory regime for credit rating agencies.

Sabrina has spent the last eight years of her career in the financial sector in Mauritius, with five years at HSBC Group in commercial banking. Upon completion of the Washington Fellowship, she hopes to use the skills acquired to support the development and diversification of Mauritius as an international financial center.

Photo credit: Sabrina Gujjalu

Meet the Fellows: Ramatoulie Gassama

The Gambia, Business and Entrepreneurship, Dartmouth College

Ramatoulie Gassama is a communications and media professional and an aspiring entrepreneur. She currently serves as the public relations officer at Ace Communications Executive Ltd.

She previously worked as junior economist at the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs and was one of the lead coordinators in the first resource mobilization and investment forum held in The Gambia.

Ramatoulie is also a TV and radio host who has co-hosted a talk show focusing on social issues and has interviewed the former president of The Gambia, Sir Dawda K. Jawara, on independence and his return from exile.

As an aspiring entrepreneur, Ramatoulie is the sole proprietor of a retail business in The Gambia called RAJAB Collection. Upon her return from the Washington Fellowship, she intends to expand her business internationally and create employment opportunities for youth in The Gambia and the surrounding region.

Photo credit: Ramatoulie Gassama

Meet the Fellows: Nguomoja Amuri

Democratic Republic of the Congo, Civic Leadership, University of Delaware

Nguomoja Amuri has over nine years of experience working in underprivileged communities in the fields of sports, music and peace building. Currently, he is the founder and creative director of Tumaini Sports Academy in Uvira and Kigoma, where he focuses on using sports and music as a medium to create cultural awareness and understanding among young people of different ethnic backgrounds involved in conflict.

He is an action partner with the Oxfam International Youth Partnerships program managing different youth-led initiatives. Nguomoja completed a sports and development fellowship at the DO School in Hamburg, Germany.

Upon completion of the Washington Fellowship, Nguomoja plans to set up five training centers in South and North Kivu, with each center selecting 200 boys and girls aged 10-20 years old and representing all tribes. These centers will provide sports and arts training, peace education and life skills, with a goal to broaden the network of peace ambassadors who will in turn launch campaigns to inform and engage their communities about peace.

Photo credit: Nguomoja Amuri
